The Green Pea Pirates

By PETER B. KYNE

Author of "WEBSTER—MAN'S MAN," "THE VALLEY OF THE GIANTS," Etc.

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WHEREIN MR. GIBNEY PUTS ONE OVER.

Synopsis.—Captain Phineas P. Scraggs has grown up around the docks of San Francisco, and from mate log on a ship engaged in the China trade he rises to be master. Ships each season in search of superior personnel to be the last of the old sailing masters, Captain Scraggs finds that he has some difficulty in securing a crew. When the story opens, Andrew P. Gibney, Shanhai, has engaged a man from whom he knows would not sail a ship, Swede, Norwegian, Russian, Finn, Swede, Dane, Swede, the formula hands. And Bert Mc-Guffey, a waster, of the Gibney type, weeps in the crowd.

CHAPTER II—Continued.

She did—with a crack that shook the rigging and caused it to recite like a barkadore in a pan. A terrible cry—such a cry, indeed, as might burst from the lips of a mother seeing her only child run down by the Limited—burst from poor Captain Scraggs. "My ship! My ship!" he howled. "My darling little Maggie! They've killed you! You've killed you! The dirty baboons!"

The surrounding wave lifted the Maggie off the beach, carried her on it some fifty feet further, and deposited her gently on the sand. She heeled over to port a little and rested there as if she was very, very weary, and cared not all the threshing of her wrecker in extreme haul her off again. The rescuing dashing in under her fantail, had more power to her on earth, in the air or under the sea, could possibly have rehabilitated it and restored it to its further want, even by Captain Scraggs.

The assistant practice of jumping on his hat was a habit with Scraggs when he was excited, and he indulged in it violently and always scientific evidence that a simple declarative sentence was the paper in his throat.

"Well, sad whirling dervish," Mr. Gibney commented calmly when Scraggs paused for lack of breath to exercise the dance, "what about it? We're in Salt Creek without a paddle; the deed to my ship and no pitch for it."

"McGuffey's fired!" Captain Scraggs screeched.

"Come, come, Scraggs, old tarpot," Mr. Gibney soothed. "This is no time for fallout. It takes an actor to fall out, and you're no actor. Now, I'll admit that you have a reason. Reason, McGuffey's fired! Strike? Say's fired? By principle? The dirty rotten wharf rat! Call yourself engineer?" he continued withering. "As an engineer you're a howling success as shoemaker, you are. I'll fix your clerk for you, my hearty. I'll have your ticket took away from you so's there's an Chinaman's drawn, mother."

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"You dog!" McGuffey roared and sprang at the skipper, who leaped nimbly up the little ladder to the top of the pilot house and stood prepared to bite Mr. McGuffer in the eye should that worthy venture up after him. "I'll have you know that I'm another! but I ought to have. I'm not working with junk an' scraps an' paper an' bad gaskets, I'll have you through."

"Brave, right—you're through, because you're fired!" Scraggs shrieked in humor. "Get off my ship, you maritime imposter, or I'll take a grand run at you, unbalanced as I am, and grossly addicted bombast! You're rotten, unseamanlike! Rotten! Rotten! Rotten!"

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"Fourteen hundred an' ninety-nine dollars an' seventy-nine cents too much. They mean you nuncle." However, gentle; for the sake of argument, that she's worth the tow, the next question then lowboat engineer'll ask is: 'Who's goin' to pay the bill?' It'll be two hundred an' fifty dollars at the lowest figure, an' if you don't get that much you'll wish the lowboat company you've some high financier. Ain't that logic?"

"It's stupid," Scraggs replied sadly, "but I suppose there'll have a fee on the Maggie."

"Steamer ahoy!" came a voice from the fog.

"Man with a megaphone," Mr. Gibney cried. "Ahoy, there!"

"Who are you an' what's the trouble?"

Captain Scraggs spoke up then impolitely, placed a horny tobacco-quaffing hand over the megaphone and gave his short, snorting answer: "I'm the American steamer Yankee Prince," he replied. "Bound from Hong Kong to Belgium, 'ed Boston, Hong Kong to Fifteen, with a general cargo of canned wood, iron an' silk. Who're we an'?"

"Telephone to the tug. We're in nine shape, reattic aure, but our rudder's gone an' the propeller's all to smash; shaft busted. Telephone in, my name, an' I'll have you in tow when we get a safe anchorage. Who're you?"

"Lookout, of the Golden Gate Life-Saving station."

"I'll not forget you, Lieutenant. My owners are Yankees, but they're sports.

"All right. I'll telephone. On my way."

"God speed you," murmured Mr. Gibney and released his hold on the megaphone, who instantly threw his arms around the navigating officer and fairly sobbed. "I forgive you, Alchert," he said. "I'll forgive you anything if you'll only get me off this ship. I'm not a sea-faring man. She's an all right fog horn, but I'm a Chinaman, an' I don't want no more ocean."

"Ah, so wanted," the C.P.O. assured him. How re we ever to get the old gentleman off without his knowing it that, Gib. Answer me I say. How're we to get him off without his knowing it?"

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